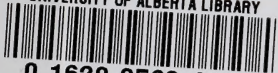


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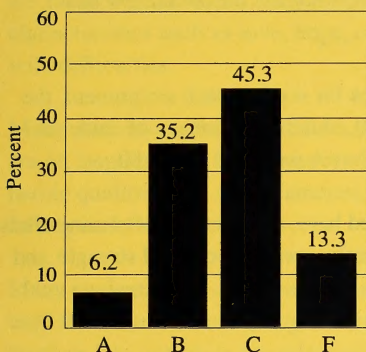


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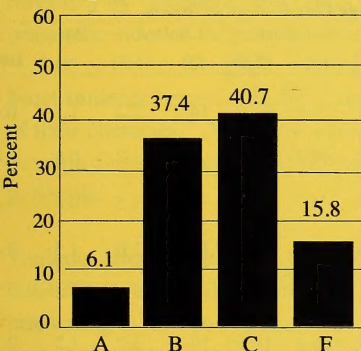
English 33

Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for January 1996

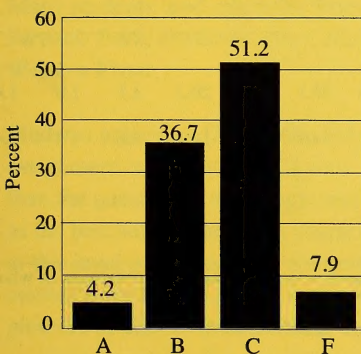
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the public with an overview of results from the January 1996 administration of the English 33 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The English 33 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each section is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 5 033 students who wrote the January 1996 examination.

- 92.1% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 4.2% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Generally, student achievement in relation to standards in English 33 was satisfactory. The proportion of students achieving the acceptable standard was slightly lower than the proportion in January 1995 but slightly higher than the proportion in June 1995. The proportion of students achieving the standard of excellence was slightly higher than it was in January 1995 and June 1995.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 61.2%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 62.0%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 62.2%

Part A: Written Response

In responding to Part A, students are required to complete three writing assignments, each of which assesses a variety of writing and thinking skills.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing the results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are provided in the 1995–96 *English 33 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examinations Program*.

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels. In January 1996, the average raw score for Part A was 29.9 out of 50.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results with provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark(%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
			Excellent		Proficient		Satisfactory		Limited		Poor	Ins*
			(5)	(4.5)	(4)	(3.5)	(3)	(2.5)	(2)	(1.5)	(1)	
Personal Response to Literature												
The student is required to read a piece of literature and to write a response from a personal perspective.	Thought and Detail	10.0	1.2	2.1	12.9	14.5	34.6	17.0	14.0	2.2	1.1	0.4
	Organization	5.0	1.1	2.1	12.8	16.2	40.2	15.5	9.7	1.2	0.8	0.4
	Matters of Choice	5.0	1.2	2.1	13.5	16.0	44.7	12.4	7.8	1.3	0.8	0.4
	Matters of Correctness	5.0	1.3	2.3	12.8	15.6	37.5	14.7	12.0	2.0	1.5	0.4
Functional Writing												
The student is required to write a response to a particular situation (e.g., a business letter or speech).	Thought and Detail	10.0	1.5	2.3	14.0	17.0	36.3	14.9	10.2	1.7	1.2	0.8
	Writing Skills	5.0	1.3	2.3	12.3	15.7	38.1	13.4	12.8	2.1	1.2	0.8
Response to Visual Communication												
The assignment asks the student to respond to a photograph. The student is required to write about main ideas in relation to techniques of visual communication.	Thought and Detail	5.0	0.8	1.0	6.5	10.9	33.5	22.6	20.3	2.1	1.0	1.4
	Writing Skills	5.0	0.7	1.2	8.3	12.2	41.7	16.3	14.1	2.6	1.4	1.4

*Ins (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off-topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded the acceptable standard on each scoring category.

Section I: Personal Response to Literature

The excerpt from the article "Brothers of the Deep" was accessible to most students, and most were able to relate the assignment topic to meaningful aspects of their personal experience. They developed themes related to the importance of having a network of friends, or members of a family, to help individuals to cope with today's world. They observed that, if this coping is shared, it forms a link between people, and that "when some people are faced with adversity, they display the best side of their character." These students stressed the importance of characteristics such as love, hope, courage, and self-sacrifice, as well as a sense of humour, in assisting us to cope with difficulties.

Many students, in focusing on the article, indicated their admiration for the heroic miners, noting that "they are an inspiration to those who read or hear their stories." For some students, the man possessing particularly heroic qualities was Alec Cameron, who "told a fellow to get out of an unsafe area and got flattened himself by falling rock."

Many students used quotations from the article (in some cases, lengthy quotations), judiciously. Some students used the comments of Jimmy Smith, "And there was never a breed of men so close together. We went down as brothers," to underline the relationship between difficult times and camaraderie. Other students recognized the importance of humour in bringing out the best sides of one's character, noting the miners' ability to cope with difficulty by "leavening their days with verbal jousting and practical jokes." Many students also displayed the pragmatic sides of their own characters by expressing agreement with Bubba's comment "Life goes on."

Most students agreed with Jim Cormier's belief that "in coping with great difficulty, people display the best sides of their character." Very few students took the opposing view. However, some students asserted that, although in some circumstances difficulty may bring out the best in people, in other circumstances it brings out the worst in people.

Students often wrote about situations from their own lives in which people displayed the best sides of their characters when dealing with difficulty (sports, accidents, illness, and death of close relatives). However, it is interesting to note that, more often than in responses to past assignments, students referred to the reading selection only, rather than recounting a personal experience.

Many students used examples from literature to support their opinions; for example, *The Chosen*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Jurassic Park*, *Medicine River*, *Black Like Me*, *Tortilla Flat*, "David," *Death of a Salesman*, and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** demonstrated a defensible understanding of the excerpt and responded to the assignment in a conventional way. Some students dealt essentially with the preamble of the assignment, rather than the question in the assignment box. These students tended to define friendship and a feeling of community as the best sides of people's character. Some students tended to moralize in their responses. Generally, students at this level organized their compositions in a functional way. These students had general control of the basics of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. In some cases, students at this level used a plethora of clichés in expressing their ideas.

Students achieving **(4) Proficient** and **(4.5 and 5) Excellent** interpreted the excerpt in a well-considered and even insightful way, and presented their themes confidently. Their effectively organized responses included introductions purposely designed to provide direction for the reader. They were able to choose words and manipulate syntax for stylistic effect, and they demonstrated competent and even confident control of Matters of Correctness.

Section II: Functional Writing

In January 1996, the Functional Writing assignment required students to assume the role of a member of the executive council of the Nalwen Teen Volunteers' Association and to write the speech to be given on behalf of this organization to Nalwen Town Council on January 29, 1996, to persuade council members not to pass a proposed curfew bylaw affecting people under 18 years of age.

In their speeches, students were expected to use an appropriate tone, to indicate their purpose, to have considered a number of suggestions from members of the executive, and also to have considered collected information about teen activities in Nalwen and about public opinion concerning the proposed bylaw.

Most students understood the assignment and used an appropriately courteous tone. Some students, however, used a somewhat aggressive tone that was also appropriate, given the "political" context of the situation. Markers determined that it was appropriate for the student to be passionate, but not downright rude, about the issue at hand.

Students achieving (3) **Satisfactory** provided enough information to fulfill the purpose of their speeches. Using an appropriate tone, they identified the issue, stated the position of the Nalween Teen Volunteers' Association, used some of the information provided to support their positions, and provided closure.

Students achieving (4) **Proficient** and (4.5 and 5) **Excellent** sustained a precise awareness of audience and an appropriate, often persuasive, tone throughout. Their speeches included specific details that provided members of Town Council with information that would have caused them to reconsider their original proposal to pass a curfew bylaw.

Section III: Response to Visual Communication

The January 1996 photograph was a picture of four people white-water rafting. In the foreground (right), a young girl with an expression of excitement or fear appears to be holding onto the raft very tightly. Directly behind her is a man who is smiling and appears to be happily attempting to control the raft. At the back is a woman who appears to be calm. In the foreground (left), a person almost totally submerged in water seems to be enjoying the experience. Drops and splashes of water fill the air, and raging water surrounds the raft.

Many students appeared to have been able to interpret the photograph at some level and to have been able to support their generalizations. Other students, however, were less successful in their writing and dealt only with *topics* such as "Family Fun," "Adventure," and Friendship," rather than generalized ideas. A few students used the photograph as a springboard for their own narratives.

The photograph elicited a variety of responses, many of which were reflective of the students' awareness of life's challenges and people's need for fulfillment. Students developed ideas such as "Technology cannot replace the human need to experience nature's gifts directly," "We should all bear in mind and respect the strength of nature, recognizing that human beings do not possess the ultimate superiority," "A sense of control contributes to a feeling of security," "People react differently to the same situation," and "Fear and enjoyment are closely connected."

Students achieving (3) **Satisfactory** interpreted the photograph in a conventional way, using generalized details for support. Many students commented on the facial expressions of the four people in the raft. Some of these students commented upon choices such as camera angle and juxtaposition.

Students achieving (4) **Proficient** and (4.5 and 5) **Excellent** provided well-considered interpretations of the photograph. These students explained how the details in the photograph and the photographer's choices (for example, framing and cropping) reinforced their interpretations.

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	B	82.7
2	C	79.7
3	D	60.8
4	C	69.9
5	D	65.6
6	A	64.8
7	D	66.3
8	B	47.7
9	C	59.5
10	A	59.6
11	B	58.5
12	C	55.6
13	C	67.3
14	A	49.8
15	D	42.5
16	C	55.1
17	B	82.4
18	C	87.7
19	C	64.2
20	A	56.1
21	D	53.1
22	B	51.2
23	D	69.4
24	A	63.1
25	D	39.5
26	A	51.1
27	C	60.8
28	C	44.2
29	B	78.9
30	D	45.9
31	A	61.2
32	B	57.9
33	A	54.1
34	D	77.0
35	C	77.5
36	A	48.2
37	A	68.0
38	B	88.3
39	B	70.0
40	D	70.4
41	A	37.9
42	C	53.6
43	D	63.3
44	B	66.5
45	D	64.8
46	B	65.5
47	B	45.9
48	C	62.2
49	B	76.2
50	A	69.8
51	D	55.5
52	C	78.1
53	B	53.3
54	C	63.2
55	A	69.0
56	D	43.9
57	D	75.9
58	A	71.0
59	D	74.3
60	B	59.1
61	D	59.4
62	A	73.6
63	B	76.9
64	A	60.3
65	C	85.7
66	C	71.4
67	B	84.0
68	C	74.8
69	D	62.7
70	A	69.7

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each correct alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint

Part B: Reading has a value of 70 marks, one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: by the curricular content being tested and by the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1996 according to these classifications.

Classification by Course Content	Classification by Thinking Skills			Total
	Literal Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	
Meanings (Main Ideas/ Details)	36, 40, 41	5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 38, 54, 55, 59, 60, 66, 70	1, 3, 51, 56, 58, 61, 68, 69	33 Items (23%)
Relationships of Form and Content		4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 18, 20, 33, 34, 39, 53, 57	19, 42, 50	15 Items (11%)
Human Experience and Values		2, 14, 24, 31, 32, 52, 62, 63, 64, 67	16, 21, 22, 37, 65	15 Items (11%)
Knowledge of Revision and Editing	45, 46, 49	43, 44, 47, 48		7 Items (5%)
Total	6 Items (4%)	48 Items (34%)	16 Items (12%)	70 Items (50%)

Subtest Results*

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 44.7 out of 70

Course Content

- Main Ideas/Details: 20.5 out of 33
- Relationship between Form and Content: 9.8 out of 15
- Human Experience and Values: 10.0 out of 15
- Knowledge of Revision and Editing: 4.4 out of 7

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

*Difficulty — percentage of students answering the question correctly

Detailed Discussion

The following table gives results for six multiple-choice questions. These six questions were chosen to represent the range of difficulty (37.9 to 88.3) present in Part B. They also represent all of the question types that appear in the blueprint on page 5. For each question, statistics are given for three student groups. The comments following the table address some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number					
	20	22	38	41	46	49
All Students	56.1	51.2	88.3	37.9	65.5	76.2
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	90.6	81.1	99.3	68.1	90.2	93.2
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	48.6	44.9	88.9	31.1	60.2	73.6

Questions 20 and 22 were two of a set of ten questions on the excerpt from *When You Comin Back, Red Ryder?* by Mark Medoff.

20. In context, Angel's response "Rye or whole wheat, Stephen?" (lines 95 and 98) functions as

- A. a pun
- B. a symbol
- C. an allusion
- D. a metaphor

Question 20 was classified under the Reporting Category *Relationships of Form and Content* of the English 33 Diploma Examination blueprint for Part B. To answer this question correctly, students had to identify Angel's reply—"Rye or whole wheat"—to Stephen's statement "I'm gonna make me some bread" (in which he means "bread" as "money") as a pun. To do this, students had to imagine the context of the conversation between Stephen and Angel and to hear Angel's reply to Stephen in their "mind's ear."

Question 20 was relatively challenging, with only 56.1% of the students answering correctly, but it discriminated highly between students who did well on the exam and those who did less well: 90.6% of the students who achieved the standard of excellence answered question 20 correctly, while only 48.6% of the students who scored between 50% and 64% answered it correctly. Only 24.9% of the students who failed the exam answered question 20 correctly; 34.1% of these students chose "D. a metaphor" as the correct answer.

22. The relationship between Stephen and Angel can be **best** described as one of

- A. habitual misunderstanding
- B. familiar antagonism
- C. shared restlessness
- D. mutual respect

Question 22 was classified under the Reporting Category *Human Experience and Values*. This question was a "best answer" type of question in that each of the alternatives was partially correct. To answer correctly, the students had to weigh each alternative carefully and choose the alternative that *best* described the relationship between Stephen and Angel. By doing so, successful students, when weighing alternative A, were able to detect that, while Stephen and Angel seem to behave toward one another in a habitual manner, they do not misunderstand one another. On the contrary, they understand one another quite well. When weighing alternative C, successful students could see that while Stephen is restless, Angel seems to be calm and, essentially, satisfied with her lot. And when weighing alternative D, successful students could detect that, while Angel has a certain amount of respect for Stephen, Stephen does not appear to respect Angel.

Question 22, like question 20, was relatively challenging, with only 51.2% of the students answering correctly. Like question 20, it discriminated highly between students who did well on the exam and those who did less well: 81.1% of the students who achieved the standard of excellence answered question 22 correctly, while only 44.9% of the students who scored between 50% and 64% answered it correctly. Students who failed the exam guessed at question 20; 27.5% of these students answered correctly, 27.6% chose A, 28.4% chose C and 16.6% chose D.

Questions 38 and 41 were two of a set of nine questions on the excerpt from "Black Waters" by Vladimiro Cermetig Jr. Both of these questions were classified under the Reporting Category *Meanings (Main Ideas/Details)*.

Question 38 was the easiest question on Part B, with 88.3% of the students answering correctly. Even 60.4% of the students who failed the exam answered question 38 correctly.

It is pleasing to note that so many of the students who wrote the English 33 Diploma Examination in January 1996 were able to associate "concern for the environment" (in the stem) with "a killing that will continue for years" (in alternative B), and to see that the statement from the alternative was a direct indication of the concern noted in the stem.

Question 41 was the most difficult question on Part B, with only 37.9% of the students answering correctly. It was even a relatively difficult question for the students who achieved the standard of excellence, since only 68.1% of these students answered question 41 correctly.

The writer of "Black Waters" lists five different methods of dealing with oil-tanker spills in the last paragraph of the excerpt. He takes the oil industry to task for *not* improving the training of tanker crews, for *not* developing better oil-cleanup equipment, for *not* appreciating the importance of timing, and for *not* learning to regulate supertankers "as thoroughly as the aviation industry polices aircraft." By doing this, he is, in fact, *supporting* all of these methods of dealing with oil-tanker spills. In the last paragraph, the writer states that the oil industry "has relied on cash compensation" rather than developing these more appropriate methods. The question is difficult because it requires students to read carefully and distinguish positives from negatives.

38. The writer's concern for the environment is directly indicated in the statement

- A. "the Valdez struck an underwater mountain that tore eight holes in the supertanker's hull" (lines 45–48)
- B. "And that was just the beginning of a killing that will continue for years" (lines 79–81)
- C. "the oil slick looked oddly hypnotic" (lines 88–89)
- D. "Thousands of feet of useless booms floated around the vessels as dozens of tugs and oil skimmers skittered about" (lines 97–100)

41. In the last paragraph, which method of dealing with oil-tanker spills does the writer criticize?

- A. Cash reimbursements
- B. Improved crew training
- C. Efficient cleanup equipment
- D. Rigorous industry-wide regulations

Questions 46 and 49 were two of a set of seven questions that were designed to test students' knowledge of revision and editing. These questions were classified under the Reporting Category *Knowledge of Revision and Editing*. In answering questions such as this, students are required to make decisions about appropriate revisions to a piece of writing.

46. A word that is pronounced exactly like another word but that has a different meaning and is spelled differently is called a homonym. In this letter, Robin has misused the homonym

- A. heard (third sentence, paragraph 2)
- B. to (last sentence, paragraph 3)
- C. their (first sentence, paragraph 4)
- D. our (last sentence, paragraph 4)

Question 46 was of average difficulty, with 65.5% of the students answering correctly. Fully 90.2% of the students who achieved the standard of excellence answered correctly; 76.4% of the students who scored between 65% and 79% on the exam answered correctly; 60.2% of the students who scored between 50% and 64% answered correctly, and even 43.9% of the students who failed answered correctly.

While the use of homonyms is still a major problem for English 33 students writing Part A: Written Response, it is encouraging to note that the majority of these students can identify the misused homonym in a list like this. Perhaps, if more students were to apply the kinds of skills they appear to be using when answering a question like question 46 to the editing processes that they use when revising their own written work, we would see an improvement in the mechanics of their writing.

49. In paragraph 5, Robin should place a comma between

- A. "think" and "about" in the second sentence
- B. "this" and "she" in the third sentence
- C. "much" and "if" in the fourth sentence
- D. "information" and "with" in the fifth sentence

Question 49 was a relatively easy question; 76.2% of the students answered it correctly. Like question 46, question 49 discriminated well: 93.2% of the students who achieved the standard of excellence answered correctly; 85.6% of the students who scored between 65% and 79% on the exam answered correctly; 73.6% of the students who scored between 50% and 64% answered correctly, and 53.9% of the students who failed answered correctly.

It is encouraging to see that so many students recognize that a subordinate clause in a complex sentence should be set off from the main clause by a comma when the subordinate clause comes first.

Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B

While it is not intended that Parts A and B of the English 33 Diploma Examination be considered separate exams, it is interesting to compare the distribution of scores on the two parts of the examination.

	Part A	Part B
A	5.2%	18.5%
B	25.3%	32.1%
C	54.4%	29.8%
F	15.1%	19.6%

In January 1996, considerably more students were awarded scores in the "A" category on Part B of the examination than on Part A. The scarcity of scores of 80% and above on Part A does not signal a new phenomenon; in the past, few students have scored at this level on Part A.

For further information, contact Tom Dunn, Gloria Malick, or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 403-427-0010.

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